COLLECTOR'S CORNER NO. 95 SEPTEMBER 3, 1976
WAYNE HYDE

"WALL-TO-WALL" STAMPS

ANNCR: AND NOW, COLLECTOR'S CORNER, THE VOICE OF AMERICA SERIES OF PROGRAMS FOR LISTENERS WHO COLLECT THINGS, WHETHER THEY BE STAMPS OR COINS, SNUFF BOTTLES OR OLD AUTOS, EVEN BALLS OF STRING. HERE'S THIS WEEK'S REPORT -- PREPARED BY WAYNE HYDE.

VOICE: THE DINING ROOM IN THAT OLD HOUSE ON WESTERN AVENUE IN THE SMALL WISCONSIN TOWN ATTRACTED STAMP FANCIERS AND COLLECTORS AND THE JUST PLAIN CURIOUS LIKE HONEY ATTRACTS ANTS. TOTAL STRANGERS KNOCKED ON THE DOOR, ASKING TO SEE "DOC" HYDE'S WALL-TO-WALL STAMPS. THEY CAME AT ALL HOURS FROM MANY PLACES, MOST OF THEM UNINVITED. THAT WAS BAD ENOUGH, BUT DOC'S PATIENT WIFE LOST SOME OF HER PATIENCE WHEN OVERZEALOUS COLLECTORS STOOD ON HER GOOD DINING ROOM CHAIRS TO GET A CLOSER LOOK AT A STAMP -- USUALLY EXAMINING IT THROUGH A MAGNIFYING GLASS. SOMETIMES THAT TOOK A LONG TIME.

THAT WAS BECAUSE DOC HYDE'S STAMPS WERE ALL NEATLY AND CAREFULLY PASTED TO TWO WALLS OF THE ROOM -- FROM ABOUT WAIST-HIGH LEVEL ALL THE WAY TO THE CEILING. HE SAID HE WANTED HIS COLLECTION OUT WHERE IT COULD BE SEEN AND APPRECIATED.

HE PUT IT UP ABOUT 1935, AND IT TOOK HIM A LONG TIME TO GET THE JOB DONE, BECAUSE IT HAD TO LOOK JUST RIGHT. AND WHEN IT WAS FINISHED, DOC'S WIFE TOOK A GOOD LONG LOOK AT IT AND DECIDED SHE DIDN'T MUCH LIKE IT. "WALL-PAPER WOULD BE

VOICE: (CONT'D) PRETTIER," SHE SAID. DOC COATED THE COLLECTION WITH CLEAR SHELLAC TO PROTECT IT. "PRETTY GOOD WALLPAPER," HE SAID.

"DOC" HYDE WAS NOT A DOCTOR. HE WAS AN ACTOR ON THE LEGITIMATE STAGE. BEFORE THAT HE HAD BEEN A SONG-AND-DANCE MAN IN VAUDEVILLE AND IN BROADWAY MUSICALS. HE WAS SUCCESSFUL ENOUGH TO ALLOW HIS PROFESSION TO SEND HIM AROUND THE WORLD A FEW TIMES -- BEGINNING IN 1902 -- AND HE COLLECTED STAMPS WHEREVER HE WENT. BUT HE'D STARTED COLLECTING AS A SMALL BOY. HE LIKED TO SAY THAT HIS ENTIRE COLLECTION WAS NOT REPRESENTED ON HIS DINING ROOM WALLS. HE ALSO ONCE ADMITTED THAT HE DIDN'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT STAMPS AT ALL -- HE JUST LIKED TO COLLECT THEM. "THEY'RE EASY TO CARRY, YOU KNOW."

SO THERE THEY WERE -- ALL SHAPES, SIZES, COLORS IN EVERY LANGUAGE AND FROM EVERY COUNTRY -- ON THE DINING ROOM WALLS. DOC'S WIFE SAID IF THERE WEREN'T WINDOWS ALL ALONG THE THIRD WALL, AND THE WIDE DOORWAY ON THE FOURTH WALL, DOC WOULD HAVE HAD THEM COVERED WITH STAMPS, TOO.

THERE WERE A FEW OFFERS TO BUY THE UNUSUAL COLLECTION, OR PART OF IT. THAT WOULD MEAN TEARING OUT THE WALLS, HOWEVER, AND DOC'S WIFE SAID SHE'D RATHER HAVE THE STAMPS THAN NO WALLS. SO THE STAMPS STAYED.

AND DOC DID A STRANGE THING THEN; HE STOPPED COLLECTING STAMPS. SAID HE THOUGHT HE HAD ABOUT ENOUGH NOW. SEVERAL YEARS LATER, WHEN DOC SOLD HIS HOUSE AND MOVED TO CHICAGO, THE STAMPS STAYED BEHIND, STILL ON THE WALLS.

VOICE: (CONT'D) THE NEW OWNERS OF THE HOUSE WERE DEFINITELY NOT STAMP COLLECTORS. THEY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE STAMPS. THEY WROTE TO DOC ABOUT IT. HE SAID HE'D LOOKED AT THE STAMPS LONG ENOUGH ANYWAY, AND THEY COULD PAINT THEM OVER IF THEY WANTED TO. HE NEVER HEARD FROM THEM AGAIN.

THE OLD HOUSE IS GONE NOW, AND SO IS DOC., HE HAD BEEN ON DISPLAY FOR FIFTY YEARS IN SHOW BUSINESS. HE FELT THAT HIS STAMPS, LIKE HIMSELF, SHOULD BE ON DISPLAY, TOO. WALL-TO-WALL.

ANNCR: WALL-TO-WALL STAMPS. . . THE STORY OF ONE MAN'S UNUSUAL APPROACH TO COLLECTING. THIS HAS BEEN COLLECTOR'S CORNER, NOTES OF INTEREST TO VOA LISTENERS WHO COLLECT THINGS, WHETHER THEY BE STAMPS, COINS, OR JUST BALLS OF STRING. JOIN US AGAIN NEXT ---- FOR ANOTHER LOOK INTO THE COLLECTOR'S CORNER.

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WJL/CAK